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ABSTRACT

Julia West was 14 years old when she viewed the carnage and destruction of the battle field at Prairie Grove, Arkansas. She was not the only young spectator at the battle, but she had one of the best views of the conflict. From her home on West Hill (AK), Julia beheld the horror and splendor of battle when the men of the Union Army of the Frontier encountered the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi. Today, only memories remain as testament to a battle that changed many families' lives forever. This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file for "Prairie Grove Battlefield" and other primary sources. The lesson can be used to teach units on the Civil War and southern history. It provides an overview with Julia West's recollections of the Battle of Prairie Grove and is divided into the following sections: "About This Lesson"; "Getting Started: Inquiry Question"; "Setting the Stage: Historical Context"; "Locating the Site: Maps (Prairie Grove Battlefield)"; "Determining the Facts: Readings (Recollections of Julia West Pyeatt; Recollections of Caldonia An Borden Brandenburg; Memoir of Nancy Morton Staples)"; "Visual Evidence: Images (Borden House; Nancy Morton Staples at the Morton House; Morton Cellar)"; "Putting It All Together: Activities (Reliability of Historic Sources; Modern Civil Wars; Civil War Year in Your Area; Monuments and Memorials)"; and "Supplementary Resources." (BT)

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ED 462 330

Teaching with Historic Places

The Battle of Prairie Grove: Civilian Recollections of the Civil War

Teaching with Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C. Street, N.W., Suite NC400
Washington, D.C. 20240

http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/70prairie/70prairie.htm

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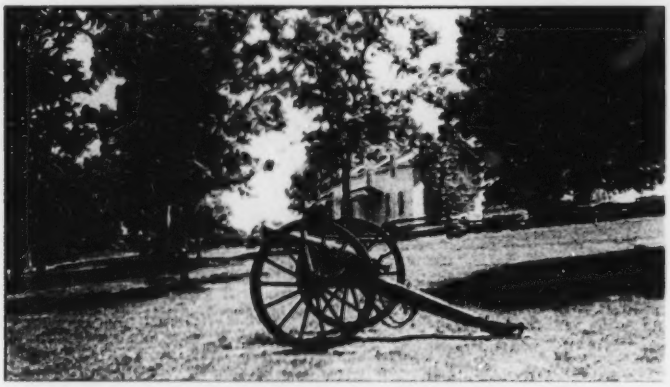
The Battle of Prairie Grove: Civilian Recollections of the Civil War

December the 7th, 1862, will long be remembered especially by those of us who lived here and witnessed the battle of Prairie Grove. It was a beautiful, cold, frosty Sunday morning.... About 10 o'clock the cannonading began and about noon war began in earnest. When it seemed everyone would be killed.



(Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park)

--Mrs. Julia West Pyeatt
Witness to the Battle of Prairie Grove, as a child

Julia West was fourteen years old when she viewed the carnage and destruction of the battle at Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Yet, the images of that day and those that followed were vividly etched in her memory forever. She was not the only young spectator at the battle, but she did have one of the best views of the conflict.

Looking south from her home on West Hill, Julia beheld the splendor and horror of battle when the men of the Union Army of the Frontier encountered the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi. The southern troops waited atop the heavily-wooded Prairie Grove ridge stretching from the large yellow two-story Borden House on the east end to the small log Morton House on the west end of the ridge. The only rebels visible were those in the clearings around the homes and the Fayetteville-Cane Hill road which bisected the ridge. Footsore Yankees advanced across open corn, wheat, and hay fields in the valley to face the Southern foe.

While none of the original houses remain, the valley fields continue to produce hay and wheat. Descendants of the West family still live on their hill. On the east end of the ridge stands the second Borden House; built in 1868 to replace the one burned the day after the battle. Only memories remain as testament to a battle that changed many families' lives forever.

This lesson is based on Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, one of the thousands of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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About This Lesson

This account of the Prairie Grove Civil War battle is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file for "Prairie Grove Battlefield" and other primary sources about the battle. It was written by Don Montgomery, Park Historian at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, and Lea Flowers Baker, Education Coordinator at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. It was edited by Kathleen Hunter, an education consultant working in Hartford, CT and the Teaching with Historic Places staff.

Where it fits into the curriculum

Topics: The lesson can be used in teaching units on the Civil War, and southern history. It will help students gain a better understanding of how the Civil War affected civilians of all ages and provide an opportunity to examine what and why people remember, and how those memories affect our record of the past.

Time period: Civil War Era.

Objectives for students

1) To place the Battle of Prairie Grove in the context of Arkansas' role in the Civil War.

2) To understand the harsh realities of civil war and its effects on both soldiers and civilians.

3) To learn to analyze oral histories for content and reliability.

4) To consider how events related to the Civil War affected communities across the country.

Materials for students

The materials listed below either can be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1) one map of Prairie Grove Battlefield;

2) three readings from eye witness accounts of the battle and its aftermath;

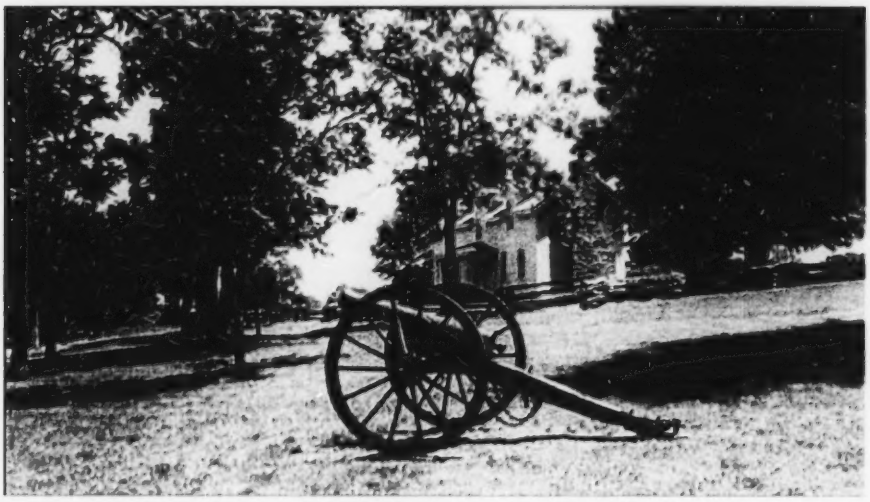
3) three photos of places associated with the battle.

Visiting the site

Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park is approximately twelve miles west of Fayetteville, Arkansas, on U.S. Highway 62 and is open year round from 8:00 a.m. until dark. For more information, contact: Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, P. O. Box 306, Prairie Grove, AR 72753, or visit the park's Web site at http://www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/park.asp?park=Prairie+Grove+Battlefield

Getting Started

Inquiry Question



What may have occurred here?

What clues help you determine this?

Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

Step 2:
Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, activities--do you notice?

Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?

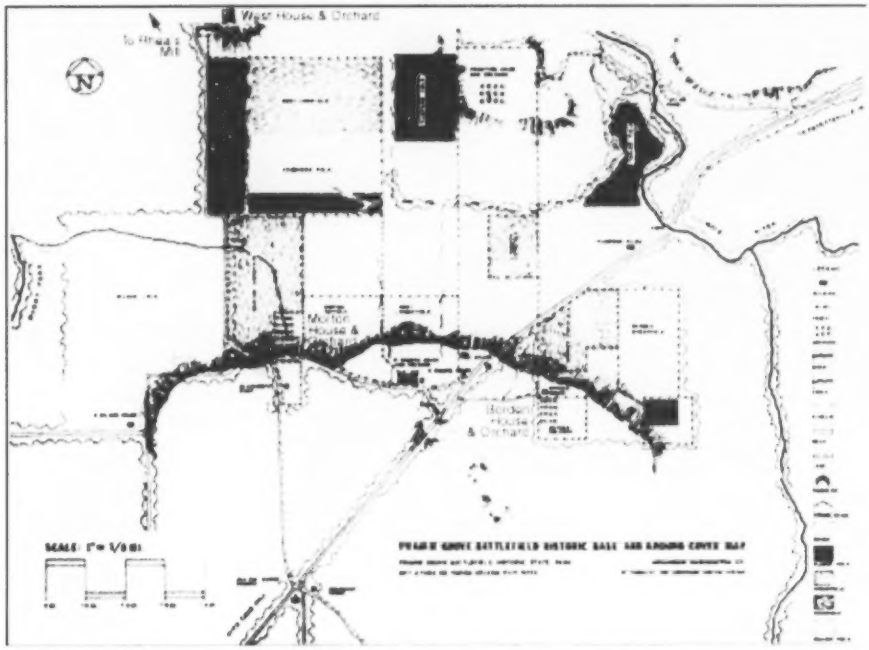
Setting the Stage

On Dec. 7, 1862, Union forces from the Army of the Frontier and Confederates from the newly formed Army of the Trans-Mississippi clashed on the open corn, wheat, and hay fields of Prairie Grove, Arkansas. The opposing forces had previously fought several minor engagements in Missouri and Arkansas. The battle opened with Confederate cavalry routing some Union cavalry a few miles south of the Prairie Grove Church. The southerners lined up along the Prairie Grove ridge, stretching from the Borden House to the Morton House. There they repelled two bloody attacks by Brig. Gen. Francis J. Herron's Federal troops who had just crossed the Illinois River from the north. The Confederates counterattacked after each Union assault, only to be thrown back by the northern cannons on the north side of the Borden cornfield, which devastated the rebel regiments as they came out of the woods into the open farm fields in the valley. About 2:30 p.m., Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt's Federal troops arrived from Cane Hill and attacked the Confederates on the western end of the ridge near the Morton House. This fighting continued until dark with no advantage gained by either side. The South fell back during the night leaving the battlefield to the Union army. As a result, the Confederates lost control of northwest Arkansas never again attempting, with any sizeable army, to seize northwest Arkansas or invade Missouri.

The Battle of Prairie Grove was practically forgotten, even though it was one of the few Union victories in 1862. Larger and bloodier Civil War battles dominated conversations in the North and South. However, the families in Prairie Grove would forever remember the images of December 7th and the days that followed. Not only did they witness the horror of the battle as it raged across their property, but they endured the subsequent harassment and raiding by Union troops and Confederate bushwhackers.

Locating the Site

Map 1: Prairie Grove Battlefield Historic Base and Ground Cover Map.



(Map drawn by John Ryder. Research by Joe Cavanaugh & Cal Kinzer. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park)

Both the Union and the Confederacy recognized the importance of the Trans-Mississippi West. Each wanted to use the region as the basis for attacks and as a source for supplies, including men, livestock, and agriculture. After Arkansas seceded from the Union, Southern forces won the initial battles in this area. However, the Union Army won important victories at the Battle of Pea Ridge and the Battle of Prairie Grove gaining control of that region for the rest of the war.

Questions for Map 1

1. On a map of the United States, find the state of Arkansas. What river runs along the border of Arkansas? Why might the control of this river and the surrounding area be important to the North and the South? On an Arkansas State map, locate the town of Prairie Grove in the northwest corner of Arkansas.

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2. Examine Map 1. Circle the Borden House, the West House, and the Morton House, the three homes most affected by the battle.

3. Using Setting the Stage, complete the following exercises. Draw a line labeled "C.S.A." where the Confederate troops lined up. Draw an arrow labeled "Herron--U.S.A." to show the position of Union attacks. Draw an arrow labeled "Blunt--U.S.A." to show the attack of this Union force.

4. How do you think the battle and movement of troops affected the homes and lands noted on the map?

Determining the Facts

Reading 1: The Recollections of Julia West Pyeatt

As a 14-year-old girl, Julia West Pyeatt witnessed the Battle of Prairie Grove from her family home, the Robert West House, on the northwest side of the battlefield. This is her account:

December the 7th, 1862, will long be remembered especially by those of us who lived here and witnessed the Battle at Prairie Grove. It was a beautiful, cold, frosty Sunday morning.... About 10 o'clock the cannonading began and about noon war began in earnest. When it seemed everyone would be killed.... You can never know the horrors of a battle unless you have seen or been in one. The fighting was constant.... Families hunted safety in the cellars. Our home being on the north side, we felt we were comparatively safe and our greatest anxiety was for our relatives, neighbors, and friends so we stood out and watched until dark. The fighting continued as long as the soldiers could see.

All the houses were filled with wounded men. Our house was also filled with General [James G.] Blunt's men. The General himself sleeping in mother's baby crib with his feet hanging over. During the night when dispatches came he would arise up, read it, write answers, or give orders. Men stood and sat around all night with their guns in their hands talking about the fight.... All available beds and bedding was used for the wounded except one bed they left for mother and the children but very few of us slept any....

We were left with hundreds of wounded and dead. For days, people hunted the battle ground for some of their missing people. On Monday [December 8, 1862], we saw four houses burn to the ground that was set on fire by the Federal troops. The homes belonged to Dr. Rogers, William Rogers, Arch Borden, and the White Taylor home. We lived in the house with the wounded for six weeks.

Questions for Reading 1

1. Where did General Blunt sleep on the night of December 7, 1862? How would you decide whether Julia imagined this or was it true? Would this image be something that you might find in a textbook? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think Julia West slept very little the night of the battle?

3. Do you think the West family invited Northern troops into their home? How could you find out?

4. How long did it take the Northern troops to claim their wounded? What does it suggest about the army's priorities in this area?

Reading 1 was excerpted from a memoir of Julia West Pyeatt to her daughter, Mrs. D. N. McCormick (date unknown). Courtesy of Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.

Determining the Facts
Reading 2: The Recollections of Caldonia Ann Borden Brandenburg

Caldonia Ann Borden Brandenburg was nine years old when the Battle of Prairie Grove raged around her family's home on the southeast side of the battlefield. This is her memory of the battle:

On the sixth of December [1862], the first Yankee was in our home, then two more came and started to tear up things. They turned up the foot of the bed and found Pa's saddle bags which had two handles. Ma got hold of one and the Yankee the other. He dragged her all over the room and the baby got scared and screamed so loud that Ma had to turn loose.

One early morning [December 7, 1862] Pa told us to move out as there was to be a battle very soon on our hill. We went to a neighbor's a mile away, taking what we could carry and some food. The battle started on the hill where our house was. We could hear the cannons and see their heads rise up to fire. We hadn't had any breakfast, we were too excited to be hungry. About one o'clock in the afternoon the noise got louder and closer. It occurred to Pa that we were in danger so he rushed us to the cellar just before the shooting started around the [Morton] house where we were. In the cellar there were barrels of kraut, cider and cider vinegar, apples and potatoes, four men, seven women, and eight children.

After dark, it got quiet and we came out of the cellar. There was a dead man across the cellar door, wounded and dying men all around. I can still hear them calling "help - help - help." The men worked through the night helping the wounded. Yankees and Rebels all got the same care. Four died that night. One soldier's leg was just hanging by the skin and the doctor cut it off and threw it outside. It sure was scary and pitiful. Some of us got sick.

Pa sneaked back up the hill and found that our beautiful two-story house that was painted light yellow with green trim, the home that we all loved so much, had been burned to the ground after the Yankees plundered the inside.... We never got a thing out of our home, not even a change of clothes. They killed and ate our cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens and used what we had stored in our cellar.... They took everything they could use, then set the house on fire. We had 60 bushels of wheat stored upstairs and it slowly burned for three weeks in the rubble.

All of the kinfolks and neighbors gave us food, clothing and bedding and household goods that they could spare, to help us get started again.... As soon as it was safe for us kids to go on the battle fields, we went and picked up clothes, canteens, blankets and anything we found to use. We had to put everything in boiling water to kill the "grey backs" [body lice]. We made bedding out of the cloth we salvaged after cleaning it. The Yankees took our good horses and a beautiful big bay mare, a fine pacer, our work horses and saddle horses and left us only an old oxen and an old blind mare, but she was still a good plow horse and we bred her to a good stallion and got a fine colt.

When the Yankees burned our house, they burned Uncle Ed's and Uncle Will's houses the same evening. The officers took Grandma's house for headquarters so it was saved.

...We had the Yankees in the winter and the Bushwhackers in the summer.... We had to hide out everything we could and then sometimes the Yankees found it. We had to live on bran bread sometimes because they took our flour and meat and other foods, so we had poor pickins then. We buried things--some people buried things in the cemetery. They shaped the dirt on top like a grave but the Yankees...or Bushwhackers got on to that after a while and began to dig in the fresh graves, and once they found a barrel of whiskey....

Well, in March of 1864 one day the Yankees ran onto two of the Southern boys and the only thing the boys could do was to run as they weren't armed. We were watching and we saw the boys fall. We went closer to see who they were and they were dead. We knew them, they were our neighbors and it was a half a mile to their house, so an old man and a woman helped four of us kids move the bodies. Brother Will and I each took a hand, Tom and Reynold each took a foot and the old man carried the head and the woman put a board under the hips and shoulders and we carried them one by one to their folks. That was some time too. A lot I can't tell...it shakes me up so.... All we thought of during the war was to save ourselves. We didn't have time to pray and when we had time we were too tired, but God took care of us.... Well, we lived over it but I don't have any love for a Yankee.

Questions for Reading 2

1. Where did the Borden family go once the battle began? Why?

2. What conditions did the Bordens find when they emerged from the cellar after the battle?

3. How long of a period does Caldonia's story cover? After the battle, what other events affected the Borden family during this period?

4. What do you think "Bushwhackers" were? Using a dictionary, look up the definition.

5. In general, whom does Caldonia blame for the suffering of the local people? Which of the events she cites did she witness personally? Does this affect your view of the accuracy of her account?

6. How old was Caldonia during the Civil War? How long was it before Caldonia's memories were written down? Do your answers affect your view of her story? Why or why not?

Reading 2 was excerpted from an oral history of Caldonia Ann Borden Brandenburg compiled in 1982 by Eve Brandenburg Acuff from notes and conversations from 1937 until Caldonia's death on November 29, 1943. Courtesy of Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.

Determining the Facts
Reading 3: The Memoir of Nancy Morton Staples

Nancy Morton Staples was 31 years old and living on the southwest side of the Prairie Grove Battlefield at the time of the conflict. This is her account:

On the 7th day of December, 1862, the advance guard met south of the grove, killing one man. Early in the day the battle commenced on the Borden farm east of the grove, lasting until sunset, winding up on the Morton farm one mile west. The families were ordered west to the first cellar, which was Morton's. Those in the cellar during the battle were N. J. and J. M. Morton, William Morton, William D. Rogers, wife and three children, A. Borden, wife and five children, Eliza Borden, Dr. Rogers, wife and two children. We all remained in the cellar till dark, but I went into the house several times to get victuals [food supplies] and some bedclothes and wraps for the children. They fought through and around the house, the shots flying like hail in every direction, only a few cannon balls striking close. Mrs. Borden's pony stood hitched close to the cookroom, saddled, and was not hurt, and after the firing ceased, she with her...children mounted the pony, passed the guards and rode to Mrs. Mock's in safety.

...the day after the battle we did all we could to relieve the wounded and dying. Such pitiful wails and cries that came from those poor men. We made them tea from herbs and did all we could for their comfort.... After the battle Will[iam] Rogers went south, leaving his wife and...children with us. The oldest and youngest were taken sick, the oldest dying one day after the battle, the other the next day....

Another shocking affair was my helping to bury Mr. Borden, a brother of A[rchibald] Borden, who was brutally killed in the Pittman lane. He had lain there all night when Eliza and Mary Borden, Martha Butler and myself got there. Two old men who had previously dug the grave helped us carry him to it and being afraid of scouts they left us to fill the grave. All the implements we had were an old hoe and pieces of boards. We blistered our hands and were worn out when we got home, as we had to walk.

...Another trying hour on us was the robbers [who] came and burned my father's feet to make him give up his money. At first they pretended to be friends and mother and I went to the cellar and got them apples. They talked, enjoyed the apples and were great southern men, of course. My father had gone to bed. After a while one of them went up to the bed and said, "Old man, it's not your politics I care for, it's your money, and we're going to have it."

I cannot express my feelings when they pulled him out and tied him, taking four of them to do it. They heated two shovels, for the night was cold and we had a big fire, and they began burning the bottoms of his feet. I threw water on the shovels with one of them pointing a pistol in my face and striking me over the back and arms until I was black and blue. I then threw water on the fire putting it out. One of them threw a shovel of hot coals on his body, but having on heavy all-wool underwear he was not burned. Then they took him out to hang him, as they had not

succeeded in getting him to tell where he had money. They choked my mother for screaming and abused us for looking out of the window. After compelling him to tell them what they wanted to know, they brought him back into the house and ransacked everything in the house, carrying off what paper money he had and destroying some notes. We all then went to bed shivering with cold, afraid to make a fire or light.... There was nothing but sorrow, trouble, and worry till peace was declared....

Questions for Reading 3

For some of the questions you may need to refer back to Readings 1 and 2.

1. What events were particularly vivid in Nancy's memory?

2. What evidence do you have about how and why the Morton and West families cared for the wounded soldiers, as well as for the sick and dying of their own community?

3. How old was Nancy when these events occurred? How many years later were her recollections written down?

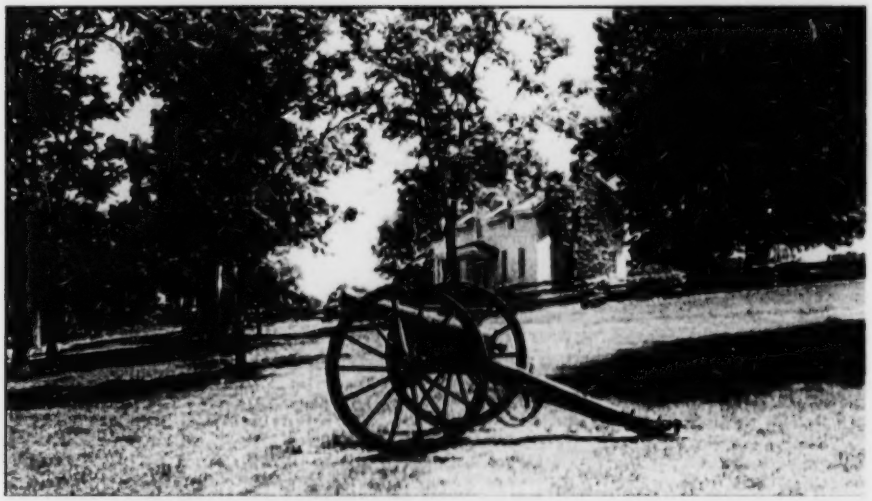
4. How would you compare the tone of the three accounts? In particular, how did each react to what happened, and who did each blame?

5. Which of the three accounts you read seems the most reliable? Why? (You might consider each woman's age during the war, when their accounts were written, the level of detail, and the degree to which the speaker seems to take a particular side.)

Reading 3 was excerpted from an oral history of Nancy Morton Staples, quoted from a manuscript written by Mrs. Staples at Prairie Grove about 1896. Courtesy of the Arkansas History Commission.

Visual Evidence

Photo 1: Archibald Borden House, c. 1868, with six-pounder cannon.



(Photograph by Don Montgomery, May, 1994. Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park)

Questions for Photo 1

1. What happened to the original Borden house?

2. Why do you think the Union Army burned the house? Was this an appropriate act in time of war? Why or why not?

3. Review Reading 2. What are the similarities and differences between the house in the photo and the one Caldonia describes in her history?

4. This house is now a part of the Prairie Grove Battlefield Trail tour. Why is it important to preserve the Borden house? Why is it important to know Caledonia's memory of the Battle of Prairie Grove?

Visual Evidence

Photo 2: Nancy Morton Staples in front of the Morton Home, c. 1913.

(Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park)

Photo 3: View of the Morton Cellar in Prairie Grove, c. 1913. The building was torn down about 1955.

(Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park)

Questions for Photos 2 & 3

1. Examine Photo 2 and review the terrain of the area by looking at Map 1. Would the Morton House have been a good shelter during the battle? Why or why not?

2. Examine Photo 3. Would the cellar have been good shelter during the battle? Why or why not?

3. How do you think the Morton family and the neighbors felt during the battle?

4. What would you have taken with you if you had been forced to hide in a cellar during a Civil War battle?

5. Did the Morton's place end up being a safe haven during the battle? How and when did harm reach the family? Why does this seem ironic?

Putting It All Together

The following activities will help students consider the impact and implications of oral history in the documentation of historic events. The activities will also help students understand the devastation of civil wars and how communities memorialize victims.

Activity 1: Reliability Of Historic Sources

Every community and family has its "war stories"--whether or not they were directly engaged in combat. Though many of these stories have never been written down, they have become a part of family or community oral history. Oral histories are a powerful way to experience the past: they are crowded with colorful details and the emotions of their authors, and often contain valuable clues to cultural traditions and attitudes. However, one must be cautious in using them. Over time, memories fade and the stories change with many repetitions, and therefore historians have to find ways to separate fact from fiction.

Have students choose an important or controversial event that involved local residents. Have them research the event through text books, newspapers, or other resources at a library or local historical society. Then have them record an interview with a relative or neighbor who was involved in some way with this event. Students should prepare ahead of time a list of questions for the interview. The questions should elicit information that will help them discover what this event meant to the person and determine the accuracy of this account. Typical questions might include: In what way was this person involved? Who else was involved and what were their roles? What does the person remember about the circumstances leading up to the event? Where was the person when it ended? What was his or her reaction? Then have students write a report that describes the oral history and evaluates its accuracy. In preparing this document they might consider the following questions: Which details in this person's story provide evidence about its accuracy? Why do you think so, or not? Can you distinguish the truth from the elaboration in the story? How? How might the person's point of view have affected his or her account? What other kinds of sources would you need to assure yourself of the story's accuracy? Are written sources always reliable? Why or why not?

Activity 2: Modern Civil Wars

The violence of the Civil War affected families throughout the United States. Today, people in countries all over the world find themselves in the middle of other civil wars. Have students find a newspaper in which they can identify a civil war that is occurring now. Then have them find several stories in papers, magazines, or on television that show how this war has affected civilians. Students should compile these stories, then compare this war's impact with the U.S. Civil War's impact on the families in Prairie Grove. Have them present this information in a written report or orally to the rest of the class.

Activity 3: The Civil War in Your Area

The Civil War affected every part of the United States. Although the vast majority of battles occurred in a limited part of Confederate-controlled territory, troops were recruited from all of the states and territories. In addition, the forces that flamed the Civil War extended far beyond the battlefields, and the aftermath was also felt far afield from the battles themselves.

Have students look at this list of nine historical events associated with the Civil War. Divide the class into groups, having each group research what happened in their community in relation to each event. Then the groups should report their findings to the class.

Historic Events Associated with the Civil War:

1. Compromise of 1850
2. Dred Scott decision
3. Firing on Fort Sumter
4. First Battle of Manassas
5. Emancipation Proclamation
6. Introduction of conscription
7. Gettysburg
8. Lincoln's Assassination
9. Introduction of the Fourteenth Amendment

Consider inviting a member of the local historical society to visit the classroom and to discuss the history of your area during the Civil War. Afterwards, have the class design an exhibit around your community's Civil War legacy. If possible, arrange with the local or school library to present the exhibit for the public.

Activity 4: Monuments and Memorials

Memorializing war in monuments, markers, and parks is very important to the American people. Have students determine what war memorials or grave sites for regiments, individuals, or battles exist in their community. Then have them examine the memorial, concentrating on the message it offers. Who does it mention? Who does it omit? How are its subjects represented--in words, on a statue, or some other way? What is the overall impression it provides? This activity can also be tied into Activity 3, The Civil War in Your Area, by researching the process by which the monument was created. In either case, have students report their findings to the class.

The Battle of Prairie Grove: Civilian Recollections of the Civil War-- Supplementary Resources

By looking at The Battle of Prairie Grove: Civilian Recollections of the Civil War, students learn about the violence of the Civil War through the eyes of young women whose homes were in the midst of an important battle and continuing conflict. Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting materials.

Prairie Grove Battlefield
http://www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/park.asp?park=Prairie+Grove+Battlefield

The Prairie Grove Battlefield is a state park under the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Program. The park's web page has photographs and maps as well as visitation information.

Hearts at Home: Southern Women in the Civil War
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/hearts/

Created by the University of Virginia Special Collections department, Hearts at Home is an on-line, primary source, manuscript collection examining different aspects of southern women's experiences during the Civil War.

Civil War Women: Primary Sources on the Internet
http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/cwdocs.html

Compiled by the Duke Special Collections Library, Civil War Women is an on-line manuscript collection which documents women's experiences in the Civil War. Included are diaries, documents, and letters from a variety of different women.

The Southern Homefront http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/index.html

The University of North Carolina has compiled a database of pictures, letters, and documents that describe the domestic life in the South during the Civil War. The Southern Homefront gives a comprehensive perspective about the lifestyles and attitudes common to families across the South.

General Civil War Resources: The United States Civil War Center
http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/civlink.htm

Louisiana State University maintains a Civil War Center that locates, indexes, and makes available all appropriate private and public data on the Internet regarding the Civil War. The site features over 4,500 links that promote the study of the Civil War from all perspectives, including women and children in the Civil War.

The Valley of the Shadow http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/cwhome.html
For a valuable resource on the Civil War, visit the University of Virginia's Valley of the Shadow Project. The site offers a unique perspective of two communities, one Northern and one Southern, and their experiences during the American Civil War. Students can explore primary sources such as newspapers, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, military records, and much more.

The American Battlefield Protection Program http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/civil.htm
The American Battlefield Protection Program, a division of the National Park Service, provides detailed on-line publications featuring different topics of the Civil War. Included is a battle summary of the Battle of Prairie Grove.

Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html
The National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System is a recently created database containing facts about Civil War servicemen, lists of Civil War regiments, and descriptions of significant Civil War battles.

Library of Congress http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwphome.html
The Library of Congress created a selected Civil War photographic history in their "American Memory" collection. Included on the site is a photographic timeline of the Civil War covering major events for each year of the war.